

ISLAND MOULD AND WEISHAR GLASS

BY
PAUL THURSTON

Four generations of the Weishar family have been involved in the glass business. John J. Weishar moved from Guernsey County Ohio to Wheeling, West Virginia in 1900 to work for Central Glass Company. His son Joseph D. Weishar, a mould maker, also worked for Central Glass Company. When Central Glass closed in 1939 Joseph D. with the help of investors bought the mould shop equipment of Central Glass. This was the creation of Island Mould, located in a three car garage on Wheeling Island.

By the early 1940's Joseph J. son of Joseph D. started working in the business.

In 1947 Island Mould moved to it's present location on Joan Street near what is now the Oglebay Park exit on I-70. the building stands beside a creek and the entrance of an abandoned coal mine. The land was once the "ranch" of Wheeling Jamboree singer Big Slim "The Lonesome Cowboy".

In 1965, Joseph J. inherited the business. His two sons Tom and John joined the company in the 1970's.

Over the years Island Mould has made moulds for all the Ohio Valley glassworkers.

In addition to major pressed glass producers such as Phoenix, US Glass, and Imperial, Island Mould also has done work for Steuben and Orient and Flume.

Mr. Joseph J. Weishar passed away on November 21, 1989. Tom Weishar has assumed the role of company president. Tom is a skilled machinist and mould maker and serves as the shop foreman. John is the vice president

and excellent mouldmaker, and business manager.

Among the thousands of moulds made at Island certain jobs stand out as especially important. In the 1960's Joe Weishar rediscovered the Moon and Stars pattern, which had been produced for a short period by the Adam's Company of Pittsburgh in the 1880's. Impressed with the simple elegance of this pattern, Joe made moulds for reproductions in several different shapes. These popular items were manufactured and sold for many years by the L.E. Smith Glass Company.

A major project undertaken by Joe near the end of his life was to make moulds for half size miniatures in the Moon and Stars pattern. Since 1988 these pieces have been sold by Weishar Enterprises, a separate business created for this purpose.

In the last twenty years of his life Joe became a glass collector. A special interest in pieces made from his own moulds. Today this collection is housed in a separate building in the front of the shop. Tours are available, but arrangement must be made in advance by contacting John Weishar at Island Moulds.

Moon and Stars Miniatures



Weishar Enterprises introduced these half-scale miniatures in 1988. Each piece is handmade and signed.